

DRAFT

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION CASE STUDY:

A R T E S I A

ARTESIA

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PLAN

The *Livable Communities* case study for the City of Artesia focuses on revitalizing an existing downtown by incorporating a healthy mix of uses, utilizing building form, architecture details and design guidelines to showcase the unique qualities of the City. In addition, the case study shows how to utilize the current assets of the City to focus their redevelopment energy and use the vitality of the downtown to strengthen the structure of the City as a whole.

EXISTING CONDITIONS



The Gateway City of Artesia

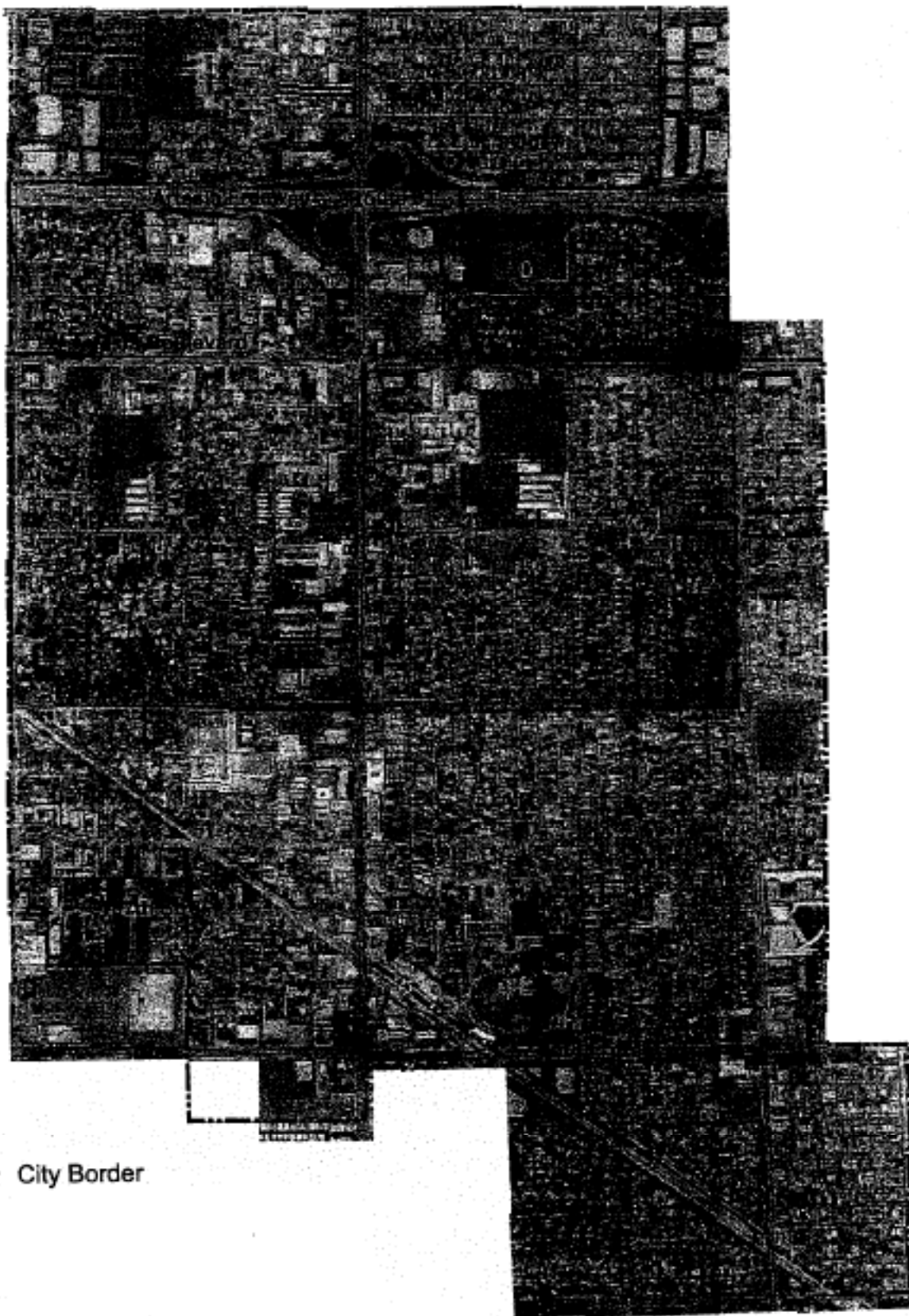


Sprawl along Pioneer Boulevard

Artesia is a city of approximately 15,000, bordered to the east, south and west by the City of Cerritos. The primary focus area of the case study is Pioneer Boulevard, from the underpass at Route 91 to the southern city boundary.

Pioneer Boulevard is the major north-south thoroughfare of the City of Artesia. In addition to its role as the commercial corridor of the City, it provides access to the regional highway system and serves as the community's transit spine, with links to regional transportation including MTA and Norwalk Transit buses. The land uses along Pioneer Boulevard are oriented toward a commercial and industrial focus, shifting from larger "big-box" retail and industrial uses at the northern end, to service and office uses such as the Miliken Hospital/Medical Center along the mid-corridor, to dense retail of East Indian specialty shops at the southern end.

One of Artesia's main concerns is its image as a "city of commercial sprawl". Despite a successful concentration of specialty retail and a strong community comprised of diverse ethnic populations, Artesia has not drawn on its local resources and amenities to reinforce its unique identity or create a strong sense of place. The current downtown shopping district, which lies between 183rd Street and 187th Street, is thriving; however, the retail located there serves only a small part of the local population, and is therefore not perceived as the heart of Artesia's community. Several of the buildings along this corridor are aging and poorly maintained. Sidewalks are narrow and undefined, separated from the street only by a curb edge. The parking lots at the street edge are for the most part unscreened and without landscaping. Parking for retail is limited, and the street is lined with distracting, overscaled signage.



----- City Border

City of Artesia - Orientation Map

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Hospital and medical center along Pioneer Boulevard.



Downtown lacks a pedestrian environment.

City Initiatives

The City of Artesia is already working towards the implementation of improvements along Pioneer Boulevard. *The Preliminary Plan for the Artesia Redevelopment Project Area* of February 2000, designates most of the property along Pioneer Boulevard, as well as the industrial properties along Artesia Boulevard and some properties along South Street to the west of Pioneer, as Redevelopment District Areas. The Plan sets forth the overall goals of the Redevelopment Plan, which include promoting the City's commercial and industrial sector, supporting affordable housing efforts and improving public facilities and infrastructure in the area.

The Pioneer Specific Plan of July 2000 addresses the use of the properties owned by Tenet Health Systems Corp. on Pioneer Boulevard between 176th Street and 183rd Street, currently used as a hospital and medical center. The Specific Plan recommends long-term reuse of the site as a mixed-use commercial and residential senior housing development that will contribute to pedestrian and commercial activity along Pioneer Boulevard.

Artesia has also applied for state and local funding for several other streetscape improvement projects. The town has received funds from the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority for safety improvements along Pioneer Boulevard, including a landscaped median, pedestrian amenities such as trees, bus shelters and street furniture and general streetscape improvements such as lighting and signage.

Urban Design Context

Artesia's downtown, located between 183rd and 187th Street, is tenuously defined. The Town Hall and City Park create a locus of civic energy, but it is separated from the activity of the retail corridor. There is no public gathering space for day-to-day interaction. As a result, the "downtown" lacks a center or civic focus.

The downtown core is characterized by tightly clustered small-scale retail, with several specialty shops selling jewelry and clothing. However, pedestrian activity in the area is limited, largely due to poorly defined pedestrian areas and lack of

Artesia Boulevard

- 1 Artesia Boulevard is used as a freeway bypass route carrying commuters past the intersection of Pioneer Boulevard
- 2 Industrial uses near intersection of Pioneer Boulevard create continuous truck traffic and minimize potential for pedestrian oriented streetscape character.

183rd Street

- 1 183rd Street is often used by residents of the surrounding region as a "shortcut" to Cerritos Mall.

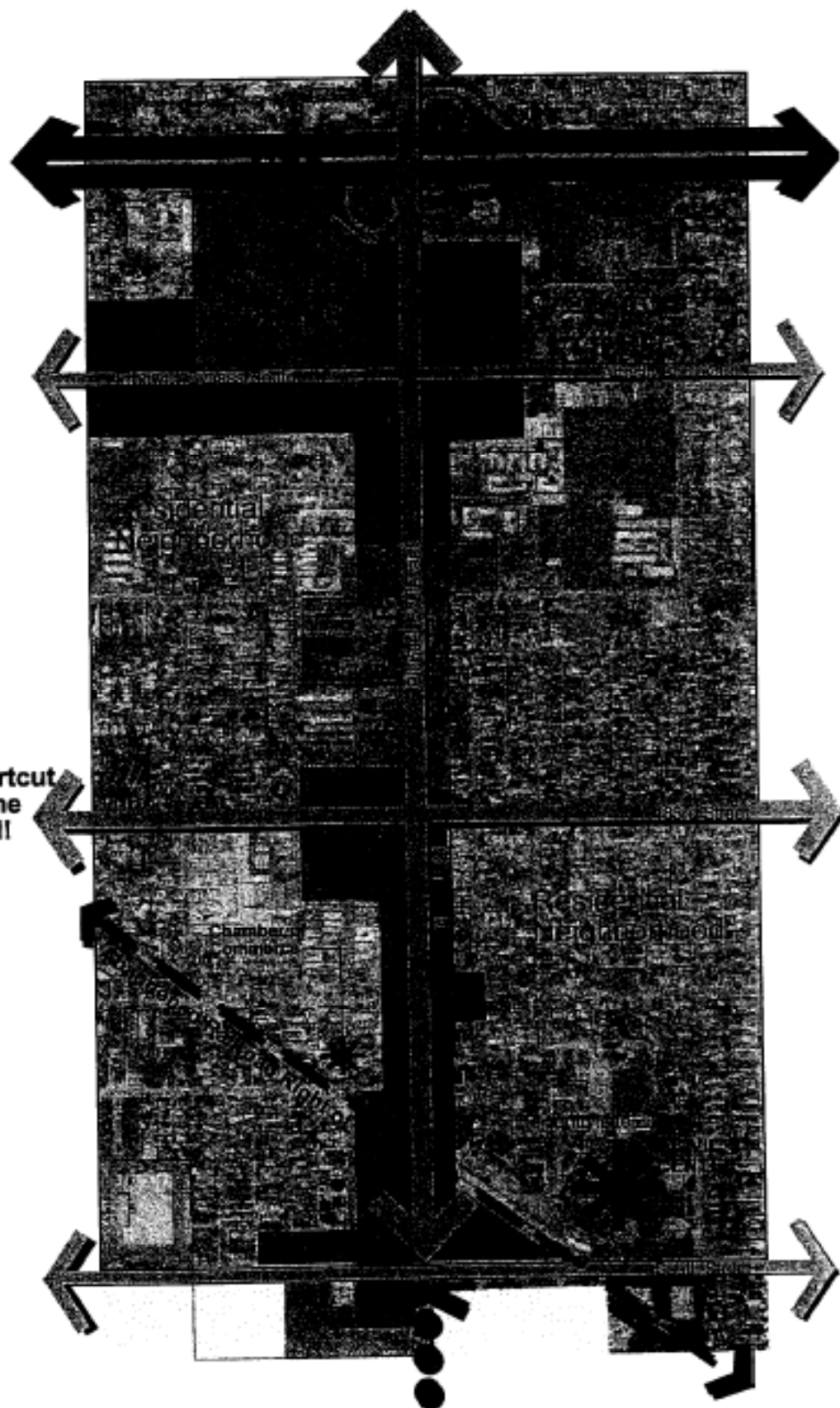
Civic Center

- 1 The existing civic buildings do not relate to downtown, and has little impact on the City's sense of community.

shortcut
to the
mall!

Pioneer Boulevard

- 1 Current "downtown" lies between 183rd and 187th Streets.
- 2 Little or no landscaping or streetscaping detail contributes to hostile pedestrian environment and gives corridor an arterial thoroughfare character.
- 3 Pioneer Boulevard between Artesia Boulevard and 183rd Street is dominated by commercial and health related services.
- 4 Sprawl development (i.e. strip mall retail) dominates the area north of 183rd Street, particularly at intersection of Pioneer and Artesia Boulevards.



Urban Design Context

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Sidewalk is bland, with no landscape elements or detailing.



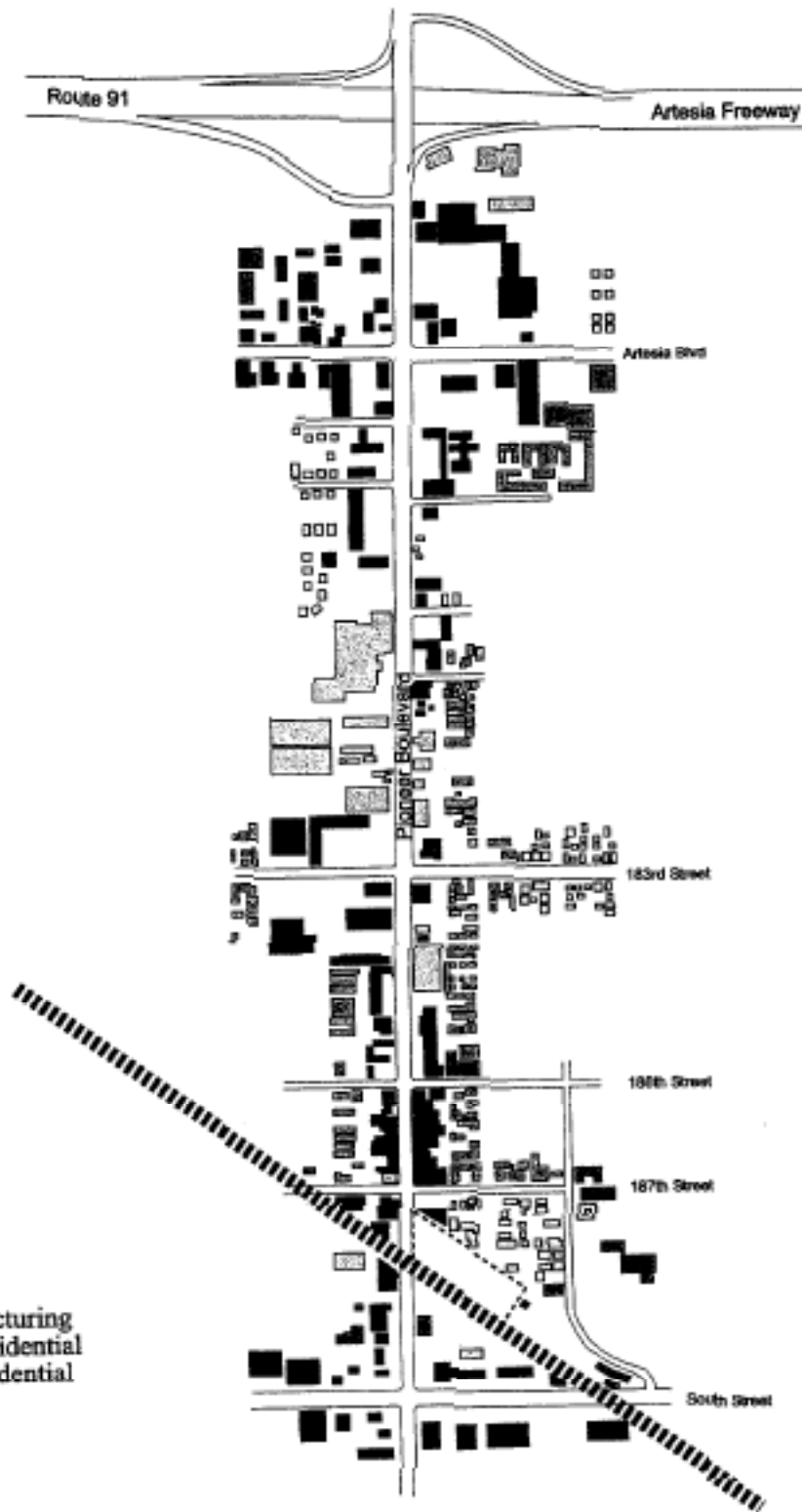
Abandoned railway corridor.

traffic controls. The lack of definition between sidewalk and street, the long expanses of pavement unbroken by trees or landscaping, and the lack of safe crossings affect the “walkability” of the area. There is no street furniture along the corridor, and detail-oriented design elements, such as decorative lighting or paving, are too few and far between to have any significant impact.

Heavy traffic and unsafe activities such as speeding and illegal U-turns are common in the downtown area. The cross streets of 183rd Street and Artesia Boulevard serve as major East-West thoroughfares for regional traffic passing through the City, and are used as a shortcut to El Cerritos Regional Shopping Center and as a bypass to Route 91, respectively. Furthermore, the high speed nature of the corridor generates concerns about customer safety. Conversations with local residents reflected a concern for the possibility of crime, and a fear that attacks on pedestrians are facilitated by the opportunity for a fast getaway.

The rest of the development along Pioneer Boulevard is sprawling and auto-oriented. The area north of 183rd Street to Artesia Boulevard is dominated by commercial and health-related services. Most of the property along Pioneer Boulevard has been designated for redevelopment. There are several vacant sites along the corridor. Prominent among these are the abandoned rail corridor and the privately owned site adjacent to it, the parcel at Artesia’s southern boundary. Other sites susceptible to change include the redevelopment site currently used as a hospital and medical complex, the GTE building on Pioneer Boulevard near 183rd Street, and several industrial properties along Artesia Boulevard.

Pioneer Boulevard currently serves two major functions that can be contradictory. While it is the City’s main shopping street and central corridor, it is also used as a regional route leading to Interstate 91 from the City of Cerritos. Both Artesia Boulevard and 183rd Street are used as cut-throughs for local traffic: Artesia as a bypass for Route 91, and 183rd Street as a route between the east and west portions of Cerritos and as a shortcut to the mall. The accumulation of this auxiliary regional traffic using the City of Artesia’s roadways, in addition to local use, results in a high speed, congested road network.



Legend

- Commercial
- Office/Service
- Industrial/Manufacturing
- Single Family Residential
- ▨ Multi Family Residential
- Civic
- - - Vacant Parcels
- ||| Rail Corridor

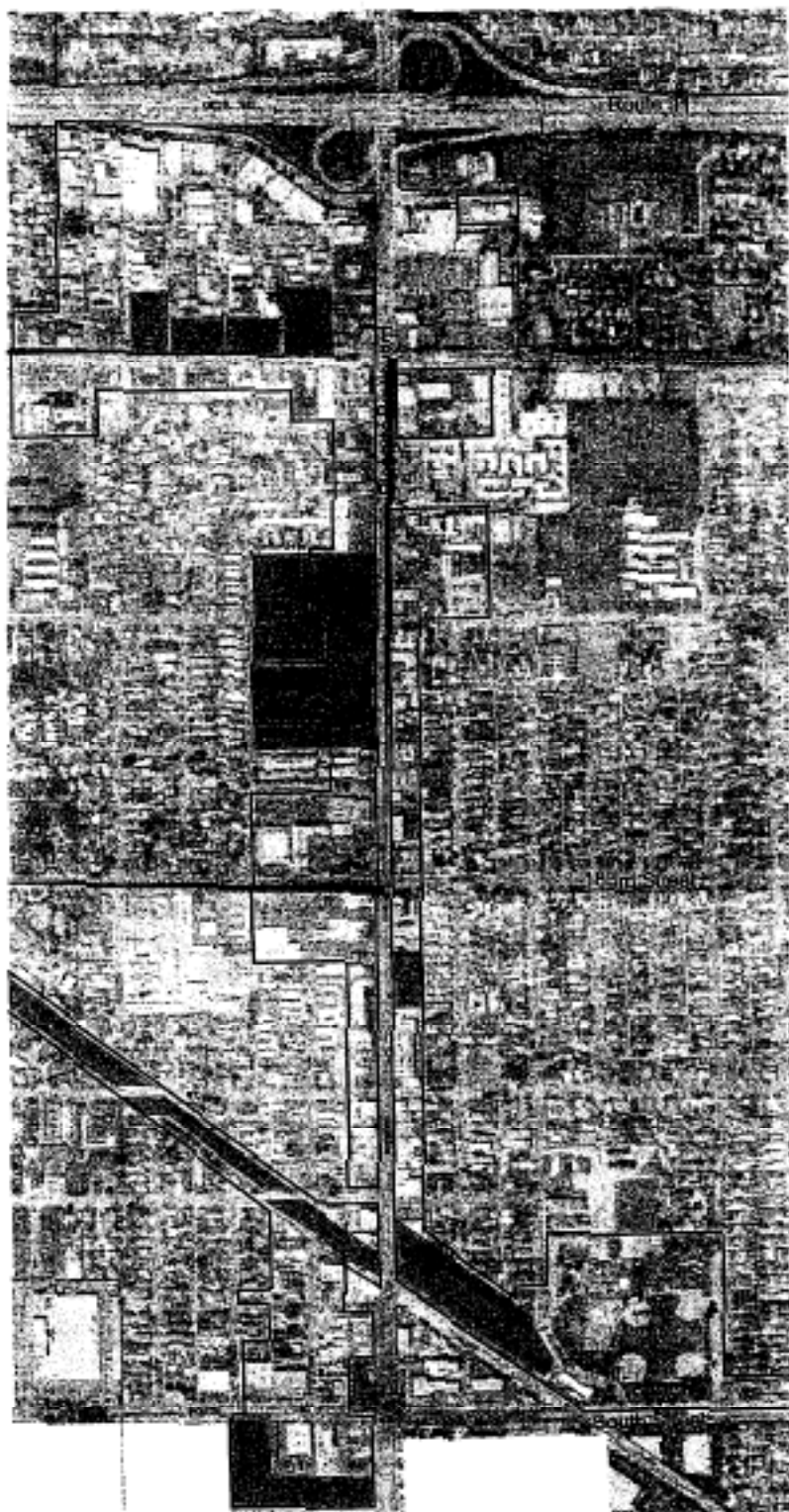
Existing Development

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0' 500' 1000'



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Legend

-  Vacant or Underutilized Site
-  Redevelopment Area

0' 500' 1000'



Vacant & Vulnerable Sites

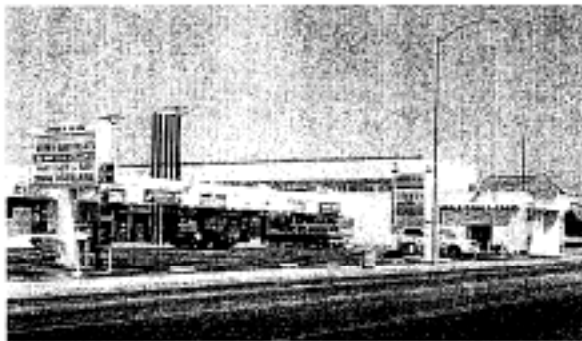
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URBAN DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS



Improved retail environment can bring more people to downtown Artesia.



Storefronts can have a stronger relationship with the street.



Retail at 183rd and Pioneer can create a new activity center.

The commercial area along Pioneer Boulevard from its southern border to 183rd Street is active and its retail establishments are financially successful. However, the district fails to provide the community with a number of values typically associated with a successful downtown, such as a setting for community activity. Focused design and landscape improvements would strengthen the identity of the existing downtown corridor of Pioneer Boulevard, and reinforce the street as an important part of the community. The sidewalk zone could make lingering more inviting through the proper siting of street trees, the addition of places for sitting or pausing, and other aesthetic enhancements. Increasing safety along the corridor, through strict definition of the pedestrian environment (possibly with a decorative fence or some other separation between traffic lanes and the sidewalk zone) and the addition of mid-block crosswalks, would encourage walking along the corridor. In addition, the extension of elements of the new design vocabulary, such as street trees, to the streets of adjacent residential neighborhoods would help to unify the image of the City.

The intersection of 183rd and Pioneer Boulevard offers a site that has the potential to act as a collective gathering point for the community. Its location at a juncture of two major arterials creates a potential locus of activity, an opportunity that could be capitalized upon through its redevelopment as a concentrated mixed-use activity node. In addition to retail and commercial activities, the introduction of a much-needed civic square could provide a focal point for this development. Streetscape improvements along the southern portion of Pioneer Boulevard could further reinforce this recommendation, by providing a strong walkable link from the existing downtown to the new activity hub.

The vacant site along the rail corridor presents an opportunity to utilize the civic element of the City as the gateway to Artesia. By keeping the site open to other potential future uses, it can become home to a new identity piece for the City. The currently isolated civic complex of City Hall, the town library and city service buildings could then be connected with the City's "downtown" through a landscaped pedestrian connection from Pioneer Boulevard.

Pioneer Boulevard

- Enhanced streetscape makes for walkable pedestrian-scale environment.
- Street improvements increase safety for pedestrians and motorists.

New Activity Center

- New retail and restaurant core serves as destination for both residents and visitors.
- "Four Corners" development creates strong sense of arrival and prominent downtown "center".
- New open space/ community square provides setting for community activities

Opportunity Areas

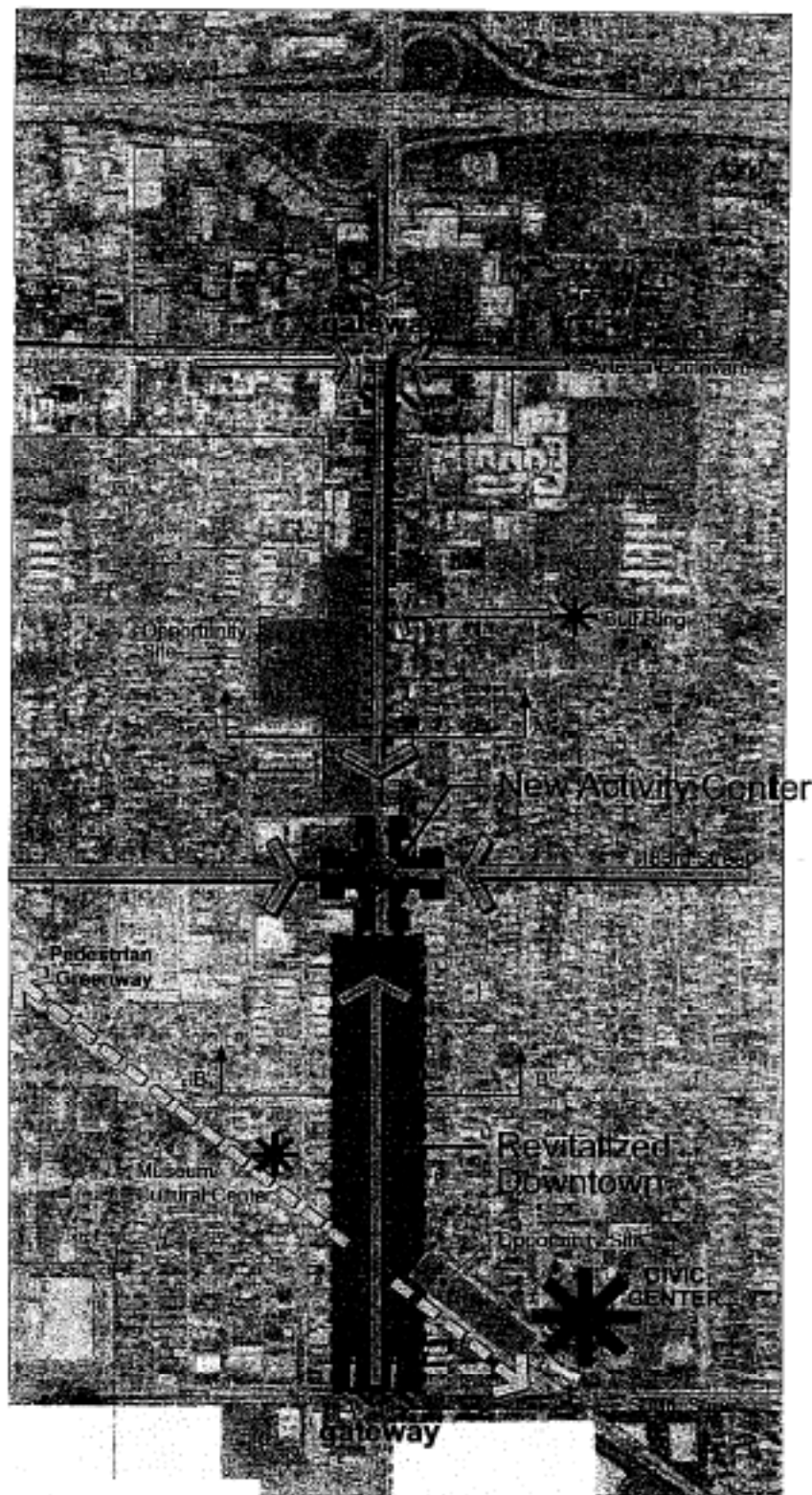
- Identify opportunity sites for civic, office, and retail uses close to the downtown core. Infill development should maintain orientation to Pioneer Boulevard and contribute to a strong pedestrian environment.
- Utilize vacant parcels to provide linkage between downtown and civic complex.
- Create gateway elements that define entry to Pioneer Boulevard.

Pedestrian Greenway

- Old railroad corridor serves as recreational greenway for walking, jogging, bicycling and other activities.

Future Recommendations

- Develop new cultural center or historic museum along the pedestrian greenway at the intersection of 187th Street.
- Create strong streetscape link from existing Portuguese cultural center and bull ring to Pioneer.



Urban Design Recommendations

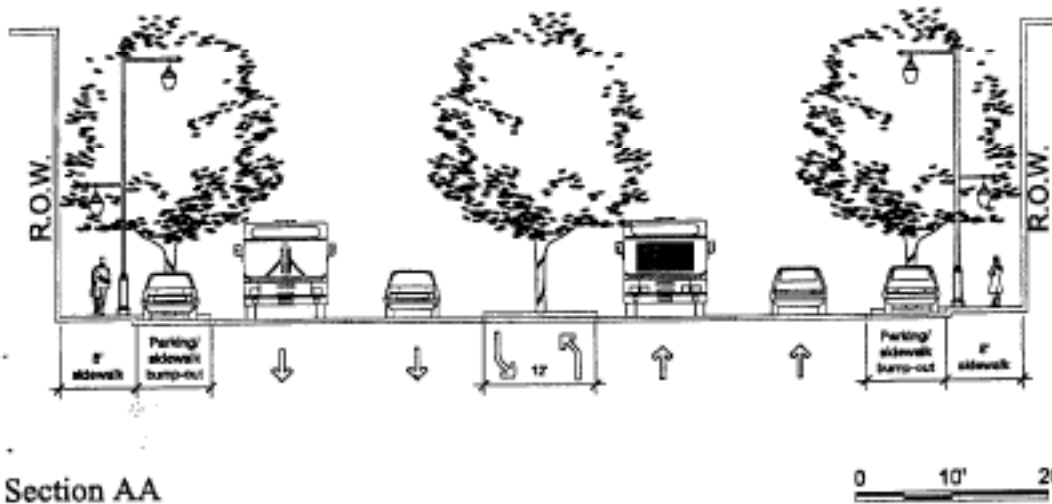


STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

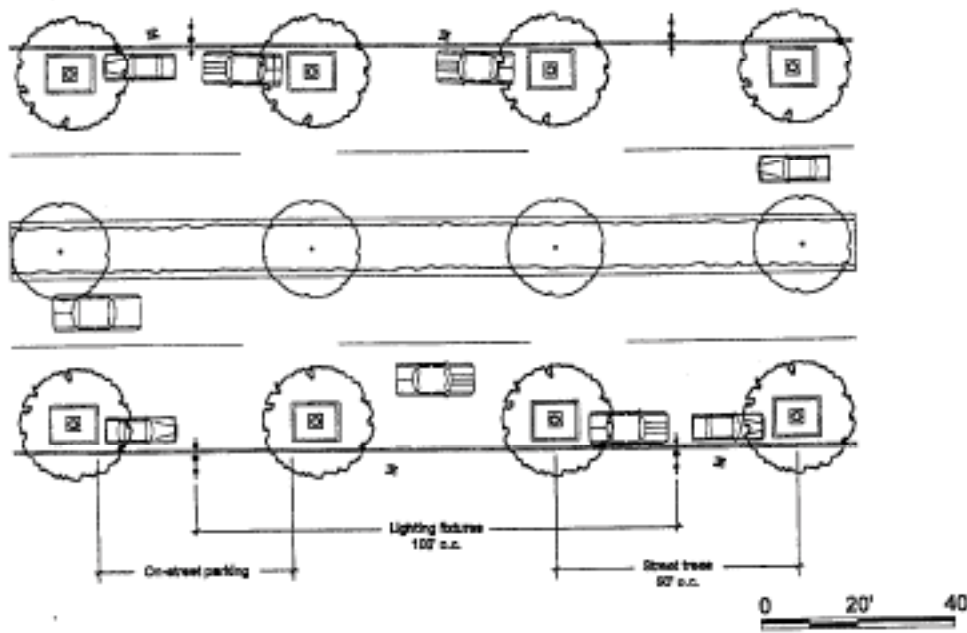
- *Implement streetscape improvements along 183rd and Pioneer Boulevard that showcase the City as a unique regional destination.*
- *Utilize design elements such as wide sidewalks and roadway medians to reduce traffic speed and restore the pedestrian realm along Pioneer Boulevard.*

The high traffic volumes and speed along Pioneer Boulevard are inconsistent with a safe, pedestrian-friendly downtown. Streetscape improvements should create a unified aesthetic for the corridor. General interventions that would create a more pleasant place to walk and shop include the introduction of a tree-lined median, special lighting fixtures and street trees. The edge between pedestrians and cars should be defined and emphasized; a railing, landscaped edge treatment, or change in grade could physically protect pedestrians from the traffic of Pioneer Boulevard. This placement of a distinct barrier between walking and driving movement would also reduce concern regarding drive-by criminal attacks on pedestrians. Crosswalks are few and far between; more signalized crosswalks should be introduced, particularly at mid-block locations in the existing downtown commercial core. Existing crosswalks should be improved with amenities like special paving, sidewalk bump-outs, and landscaping elements to call out their locations. With these improvements, traffic along this segment of the corridor would be slowed, and pedestrian safety increased. Proposed Street Section AA shows Pioneer Boulevard redesigned with these improvements.

The high concentration of “destination retail” uses (and the lack of “convenience retail” uses) suggest an opportunity to make better use of the portion of the public right-of-way currently used for on-street parking. The streetscape of Pioneer Boulevard between 183rd and 187th Streets would be enlarged and strengthened by claiming the parking lanes of the roadway as part of the pedestrian realm. While this strategy would reduce parking along the arterial, it would serve to expand the usable pedestrian realm, resulting in an exchange of some convenience for much-needed district vitality, capacity for on-street energy. The additional space gained by this move would create a flexible zone that could be used for on-street parking, café seating for restaurants, bus stop pavilions, public seating, landscaping or planting. Proposed Street Section BB shows Pioneer Boulevard with reduced on-street parking and a wider pedestrian right-of-way.

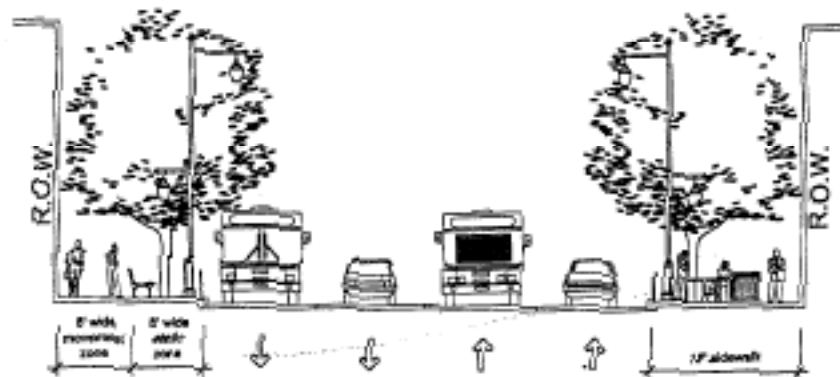


- ☐ Crossing distance is reduced by enlarging sidewalk to include former on-street parking lane. Lost parking spaces will be replaced by proposed parking at vacant railside parcel.
- ☐ On-street parking provides buffer between pedestrians and traffic
- ☐ Sidewalk bump-outs give width to pedestrian realm and provide area for tree planting.



- ☐ Street trees 50' on center enhance streetscape and buffer pedestrians from roadway traffic.
- ☐ Landscaped median reduces street width and slows traffic along corridor.
- ☐ Street lighting 100' on center reflects character of downtown Artesia and adds safety to pedestrian corridor.

Pioneer Boulevard - Proposed Street Section AA

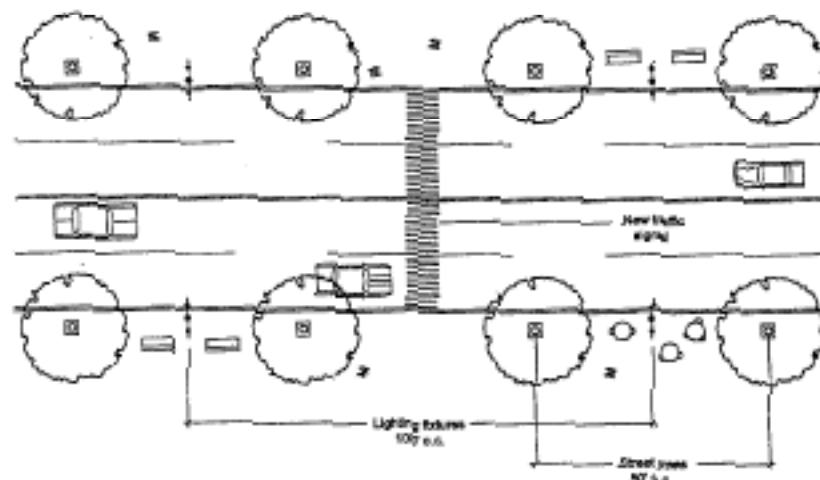


- Crossing distance is reduced by enlarging sidewalk to include former on-street parking lane. Lost parking spaces will be replaced by proposed parking a vacant rail-side parcel.
- Street furniture and seating activates the sidewalk area.
- Decorative fence buffers pedestrian realm from traffic of Pioneer Boulevard.

Section BB

Proposed 80' right of way improvements

0 10' 20'



Plan

Proposed 80' right of way improvements

0 20' 40'

- Street trees 50' on center enhance streetscape and buffer pedestrians from roadway traffic
- New signalized mid-block crossings at center of retail district increase pedestrian safety and encourage activity on both sides of street.
- Decorative, pedestrian-scaled street lighting 100' on center reflects character of downtown Artesia and adds safety to pedestrian corridor.

Pioneer Boulevard - Proposed Street Section BB

OPPORTUNITY AREAS

- *Utilize the vacant site at the south gateway entrance to Pioneer Boulevard to give a civic presence to the City of Artesia, providing visual and physical connections to City Hall, the civic complex and recreation fields adjacent to it, and the former rail line.*
- *Create gateway and landmark elements that articulate the entries to the City and its new activity center.*

The vacant site along the abandoned railway presents an opportunity to the City of Artesia, and it is recommended that the City pursue efforts to acquire this property. While acquisition may be difficult, the site does lie within the City's redevelopment area, and, because of its location at the City's entrance and along a corridor that has the potential to be used for recreation or transportation in the future, it is a key element to the success of the downtown. Development potential for the rail corridor ranges from a recreational greenway to a regional bikeway, and could even someday be considered for high-speed transit.

The site has the potential to provide the crucial missing link between the existing downtown retail core and the Civic Center complex/recreation fields. The development of a landscaped pedestrian connection, with the potential to become a roadway in the future, will give the City a presence along Pioneer Boulevard. A landmark building with ground level retail along Pioneer Boulevard would reinforce the entrance to downtown and provide revenue to help affect the cost of the land and any other public facilities constructed on the site. The remainder of the site could potentially be used to fill the need for parking in the downtown/civic core (either as surface parking or in a structure), and replace parking lost to Pioneer Boulevard improvements. Employee parking could be relocated to reserve the more centrally located spaces for short-term customer parking.

In order to promote the creation of an identifiable and memorable downtown character, special attention should be devoted to improvements that define the boundaries of the district and that help to crystallize its image in the minds of its residents. The threshold to downtown Artesia should be clarified through landscaping, architectural elements or signage at the intersections of Pioneer Boulevard and South Street, and at Pioneer and Artesia Boulevard. Other long-term strategies that could further strengthen Artesia's downtown experience include the development of a museum or cultural center in the current Chamber of Commerce building, and the facilitation of a link from the Portuguese cultural center and bullring to the main corridor of Pioneer Boulevard.

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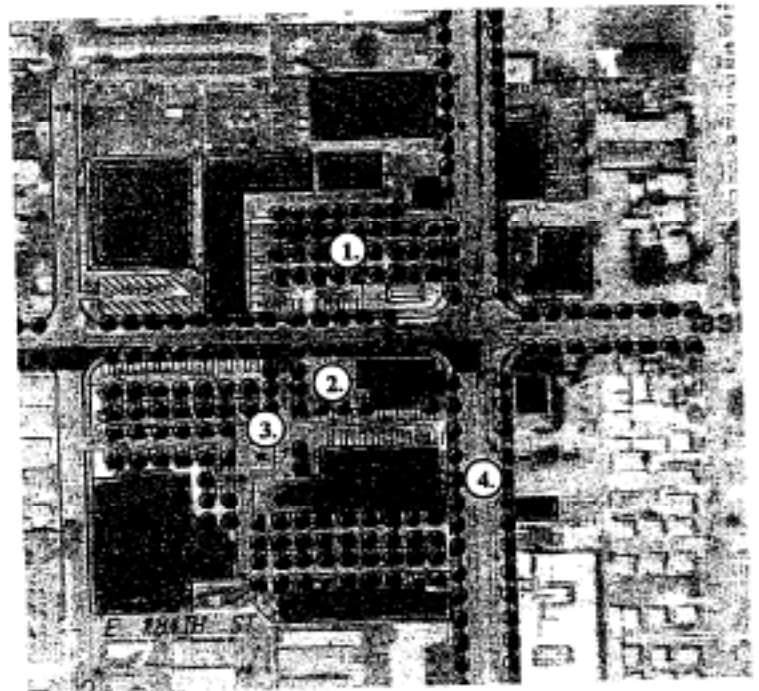
NEW ACTIVITY CENTER

- Develop the intersection of 183rd and Pioneer Boulevard as a dynamic new activity center to serve as a community gathering point.
- Capitalize on Artesia Boulevard as a freeway bypass by creating an attractive landmark to draw people down Pioneer Boulevard and into the new town center.

The major crossroads at 183rd Street and Pioneer Boulevard, provides an ideal location for a new activity center. An infusion of pedestrian-oriented retail focused around an open space can serve as a setting for community gathering. With streetscape improvements that tie the new development to the existing downtown, Pioneer Boulevard can become a dynamic public corridor. Development should include a range of uses, but retail and restaurant use is best suited for this high-visibility location, with offices or residences on the second floor. Current retail providers are not serving the full spectrum of the local population, resulting in the feeling on the part of some residents that the downtown is not "everyone's" downtown. Neighborhood-oriented retail at a small scale (for example, drug stores, hardware stores, and convenience) would help broaden downtown's appeal by filling untapped retail niches.

PHASE I ACTIONS:

It is suggested that redevelopment of the properties at the intersection of 183rd and Pioneer Boulevard occur in phases, in order to spread out costs and capitalize on project momentum gained from initial successes. Initial steps include sidewalk and street improvements at strategic locations, the provision of plaza and public outdoor space within the context of the existing buildings, and redesign of existing parking. Re-organize building lot configurations to provide outdoor space for pedestrians. Improve parking areas through a dense "orchard" landscape of deciduous shade trees, planted at a ratio of one tree for every 5 spaces.

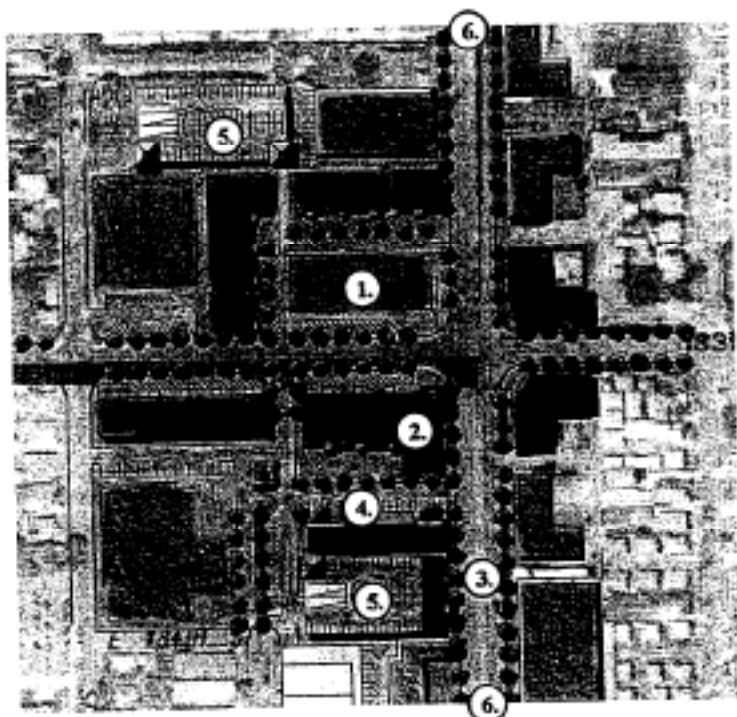


1. Orchard tree planting within existing parking
2. Provision of new public spaces
3. Street trees along Artesia Boulevard and 183rd Street
4. Reorganization of interior circulation

PHASE 2 ACTIONS:

Create a public gathering space, highly visible at the intersection, yet buffered from street traffic by a landscaped edge, to provide a community center. Establish retail and other uses that will anchor the intersection and provide needed activity along the street. Use sidewalk improvements, including street trees, generous sidewalk right-of-ways, and special paving or street furniture, to make the street a pleasant place to be and encourage walking from shop to shop. Use internal plazas that serve their surrounding buildings to create smaller social spaces, allowing shoppers and visitors a place for respite with street furniture and greenery. Create "outdoor rooms" that can be used as additional retail space or café seating. Reduce the amount of paved area with the construction of parking garages, located to serve nearby businesses.

Promote new development at this activity node through gateway elements at the north and south entrances to the City. Locate signs or architectural elements that announce what lies ahead, to capture traffic on bypass routes and draw them into Artesia's revitalized downtown.



1. Public gathering space
2. New street-oriented retail
3. Street improvements along Artesia Boulevard
4. Interior plazas and public spaces
5. Structured parking
6. Gateway elements at City entrances